

KINDERGARTEN FOR ETERNITY

A Six-Session Study

Leader's Edition

for small groups, Sunday school classes, and home gatherings

Step Harmon

Note:

This Bible study is free to use and share.

Download the free PDF at stepharmon.com

Enjoy and welcome to class.

© 2026 step harmon. All rights reserved.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This is a six-week small-group study built around stories from **Kindergarten for Eternity**, a memoir of nine years of street ministry on the West Coast.

Each session pairs two of the lessons the streets teach—stopping with seeing, listening with trusting, waiting with going, giving with receiving, returning with suffering, and wonder with sending.

The study is built for groups of four to fifteen people meeting once a week for ninety minutes. It is shaped to be picked up and run by anyone willing to read it through ahead of time. You don't need a degree or a teaching gift. You need a room, a Bible, and the willingness to let the discussion go where it needs to go.

The full memoir contains the stories the study draws on, plus many more. If you or your group want the longer version of any of these encounters, or stories that aren't covered in these six sessions, the book is available at Amazon:

<https://a.co/d/01wwFJZ4>

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each session has the same shape. There is an opening question to gather the group. There are two scripture passages. There is one story from the book, read aloud or summarized. There are six discussion questions. There is a personal practice for the week ahead. There is a closing prayer. And there are leader notes scattered throughout, marked off in the margin, that anticipate where the discussion may need help.

Read the session before the meeting. Read it twice if it is your first time. Mark the questions you most want the group to land on. Decide ahead of time which ones you would skip if time runs short. The questions are sequenced so that the early ones warm the room and the later ones sit with the harder edge. Don't rush the early ones; they earn the later ones.

If the group is sitting in silence after a question, let the silence stay. Most of the work of these sessions happens in the silences.

And the practice the group commits to at the end of each session matters. Make a note of it on your phone. Open the next session by asking what people noticed when they tried it. The practices stick when the group expects to be asked about them.

THE SIX SESSIONS

The order of the sessions is intentional. Each session builds on the one before it. Stopping comes first because nothing else can happen until you have learned to be interrupted. Sending comes last because being sent is what the rest of the curriculum is for.

If your group can't do all six in a row, do them in order anyway, with breaks where you need them. Don't skip a session.

Session 1 — Stopping & Seeing

On being interrupted, and looking past appearances

Session 2 — Listening & Trusting

On hearing what isn't spoken, and faith with feet under it

Session 3 — Waiting & Going

On the long middle, and obedience to the small instruction

Session 4 — Giving & Receiving

On love with hands, and letting people teach you

Session 5 — Returning & Suffering

On the second visit, and the chapters that don't end the way you wanted

Session 6 — Wonder & Sending

On the kingdom near, and becoming one of the sent

SESSION ONE

STOPPING & SEEING

On being interrupted, and looking past appearances

This first session covers two of the most basic moves in the Christian life. They are basic because they are not optional. Anyone who is going to follow Jesus has to learn how to be stopped, and how to look at people the way He looks at them.

On the streets, those two moves are inseparable. You cannot see the person sitting on a curb if you have never let yourself be stopped. And you cannot let yourself be stopped if you have already decided what you are looking at before you look.

Tonight's session is two stories that show the moves in action, three scripture passages that anchor them, and a conversation about what these look like in your own week.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

As people arrive, get the room settled. When everyone is present, open with a brief prayer asking God to be in the conversation. Then ask the gathering question.

Gathering question

Tell us about a time this week when you almost didn't notice something, and then you did. It can be small. A person, a moment, a thought.

LEADER NOTE *Don't let people pass on the gathering question. Even short answers are fine. The point is to get every voice in the room making sound. Quiet groups stay quiet if the first ten minutes don't require anyone to speak.*

READ THE STORY

about 15 minutes

Have someone in the group read the following passage aloud. It is adapted from Chapter 2 of Kindergarten for Eternity, “Miracle on the Roadside.”



Greg had been wasting away in the dirt for months. Six foot two, maybe a hundred and forty pounds, pressed into an embankment with ants crawling across his blankets and a can of Raid within arm’s reach. Thousands of people passed him every day. They saw him. He wasn’t their problem.

For weeks, Step had felt a pull to come there. Life got in the way—appointments, errands, the next thing. The pull never went away. It just kept getting overruled. One day he stopped ignoring it. He parked across the street, cut through traffic, and walked over with a tuna sandwich and a soda.

Greg told him he could not hear out of his left ear. He told him his legs would no longer hold him up. Step prayed. The traffic faded. The air went still.

Two days later, Step came back. Greg was sitting up. He could hear. He had walked four miles round-trip to the hospital and back, on legs that two days before could not hold him.

A week later, Step came back again. Greg was gone. The sleeping bag was gone. The bike was gone. The Raid. All of it. A woman in the laundromat across the street told Step what had happened:

Greg's brother had come for him. Drove out from the Midwest. They had not spoken in thirty years.

God had healed Greg's ear. God had healed Greg's legs. And then, quietly, while no one was looking, God had healed something neither of them had thought to ask about.



LEADER NOTE *Read it slow. Don't rush. After the reader finishes, let the room sit with it for a count of five before you move on.*

OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

Read each passage aloud. After each one, ask the question that follows it. Do not solve the question. Hold the question.

First passage

Luke 10:30–34

Jesus replied, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

The priest and the Levite both saw the man. So did the Samaritan. The difference was not whether they saw him. It was what they did with what they saw. What is the difference, in your own life, between seeing someone and actually stopping for them?

LEADER NOTE *This question can stall in abstractions about busy schedules. If it does, ask: “when was the last time you stopped for someone you didn’t plan to stop for?” Concrete examples will pull the conversation back.*

Second passage

1 Samuel 16:7

But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the

things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Samuel was looking for a king and assumed it would be the impressive son. God said no. When have you assumed wrongly about someone based on what was on the outside?

Third passage

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

In Chapter 3 of Kindergarten for Eternity, Step describes feeding a man with a forehead tattoo at a Chipotle for two months—a man who had no belongings, no transportation, and ultimately appeared in a beach town fifteen miles away that he had no way to have gotten to. On the drive home Step wondered whether he had been an angel. The radio at that moment was preaching on Hebrews 13:2.

What does Hebrews 13:2 do to the way you read the strangers in your week?

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

These questions are for the group as a whole. Some will land quickly. Some will need silence to land at all. Don't fill the silence.

Questions

1. Greg had been on that embankment for months. Step had been feeling the pull for weeks. Why is the gap between knowing the right thing and doing it sometimes so long? What fills that gap in your own life?
2. "They saw him. He wasn't their problem." What are some of the ways our culture trains us to see people without responsibility for them? Where have you noticed that training in yourself?
3. Step prayed for Greg's ear and his legs. He didn't pray for the brother. The brother showed up anyway, after thirty years of silence. What does that tell you about how God answers prayer beyond what we know to ask for?
4. Stopping costs something—time, attention, comfort. What did stopping cost the Good Samaritan? What does stopping tend to cost you, when you do it?
5. Hebrews 13:2 implies that some of the strangers we meet are more than they appear. Without becoming superstitious about it, what would change in your week if you treated each stranger as if heaven might be sending them?

6. Are there people you have stopped seeing because you have seen them many times? Family members, coworkers, neighbors? What would it look like to actually look at them this week?

LEADER NOTE *Question 6 often surprises people. They expect the homeless and find that the answer is closer to home. Don't move past it quickly if a long pause follows.*

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

about 5 minutes

Before you leave, the group commits to one practice for the week ahead. The practice is small on purpose. The streets do not run on epiphanies; they run on small obediences. So does the rest of the Christian life.

This week

Pick one person in your life that you have stopped really seeing—a family member, a coworker, a neighbor, the person at a counter you pass through every week. Spend ten extra seconds with them this week. Make eye contact. Ask one specific question that goes a layer below the surface. Listen to the answer for longer than is comfortable.

And separately, pay attention to any pull you feel during the week to stop for someone you would not normally stop for. Don't talk yourself out of it. Stop. See what happens.

LEADER NOTE *Make a note of the practice on your phone before you leave. Next week's gathering question will ask the group what they noticed when they tried it. Don't skip the follow-up; the practices stick when the group expects to be asked about them.*

CLOSE

about 5 minutes

Have someone in the group read the closing prayer aloud. Then dismiss.



Lord, we are quick people in a quick world. We move from one thing to the next without letting much in. Slow us down this week. Open our eyes to the people we have been walking past. Open our ears to the pulls we have been overruling. Teach us, like the Samaritan on the road and like Step on the embankment, the ordinary art of stopping. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



LEADER NOTE *If anyone in the room had something land hard during the discussion, check on them privately as people leave. Don't make a project of it. Just ask, "are you doing all right?" and listen to the answer. Half of pastoring a small group happens in the parking lot.*

SESSION TWO

LISTENING & TRUSTING

On hearing what isn't spoken, and faith with feet under it

Last week the group practiced stopping and seeing. This week the work moves a layer deeper. Once you have stopped, once you have seen, the next two questions are: are you listening, and are you willing to act on what you hear?

Listening, in this study, doesn't mean just hearing words. It means staying long enough that something other than words can be communicated. Sometimes that's the Holy Spirit nudging you. Sometimes that's a person whose mouth doesn't work but whose heart is making a sound.

Trusting is what you do with what you have heard. Belief becomes a verb when it touches the ground. You go to the address. You speak the word. You write the verse on the walkway in chalk.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

Open with prayer. Then check in on last week's practice.

Follow-up question

Last week we committed to noticing one person we had stopped seeing, and to following any pull we felt to stop for someone unexpected. What did you notice?

Gathering question

When was the last time you had a strong sense that you should do something—call someone, drive somewhere, say something—without a clear explanation for it? What did you do with that sense?

LEADER NOTE Some people will say they've never had that sense. That's honest. Don't correct them. Move to the next person and let the answers accumulate. By the third or fourth, the room will recognize the experience whether they've named it that way or not.

READ THE STORY

about 15 minutes

Have someone read the following passage aloud. It is adapted from Chapter 15 of Kindergarten for Eternity, “The Heart Spoke.”



He was six-two, maybe taller. Shirtless. Shoeless. Standing on a Santa Barbara sidewalk in torn white cotton pants, sunburned down to the bone. Tourists in flip-flops walked around him without seeing him.

Step had a backpack in his car that he had been carrying around for weeks, planning to give it to whoever it felt right to give it to. Every day that week, looking at the people he was helping, the answer had been not yet. The backpack kept staying in the car.

Step saw him from thirty feet away. He knew. The Holy Spirit said it but the nudge confirmed something he already felt. Some recognitions don't need words.

He walked back to the car, stuffed some food inside the pack, came back, and handed it to him. “This is for you.”

The man opened his mouth to say something. Nothing came out—no words. What came out instead was a sound, raw and deep, from somewhere below his chest. The kind of sound a small child makes before they have words. He was mute.

Step clenched his fist, tapped it twice against his heart, and pointed at him. I see you. God sees you. The man's eyes welled up.

Step's did too. The gesture had come from somewhere Step had not been to before—his heart finding words his mouth didn't have.

Then the man pointed at his own chest. The skin was burning. Step's friend Ian, who was with him that day, reached up, grabbed the back of his own T-shirt, and pulled it off over his head. He handed it over. The man pulled it on like it was the finest thing he had ever owned. Tears came down his face and cut clean lines through the dust.



LEADER NOTE *This story can hit people hard. After the reading, give a longer pause than usual—eight to ten seconds. Some people may be moved before the discussion begins.*

OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

First passage

Romans 8:26

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The mute man could not form words. The Spirit, Romans says, prays through groanings too deep for words. What is the connection between these two? When in your own life have you been on the inside of an experience that words couldn't carry?

Second passage

Luke 1:37

For nothing will be impossible with God.

In Chapter 5 of the book, Step prays for a 19-year-old named Alex who had been sent home from UCLA to die of cancer. Step writes the verse Luke 1:37 in chalk on the family's front walkway. The family walks over it every day. A few days later Alex wakes up feeling different, walks into UCLA under his own power, and the labs come back saying he is cancer-free.

What does it mean, practically, to live with this verse over the door? Where in your life have you been treating something as impossible that you have not actually brought to God?

Third passage

Mark 11:23–24

Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, Go, throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark says faith speaks the mountain into motion. What is the difference between believing something and saying it out loud?

LEADER NOTE *These passages may stir hard memories—people who prayed for healings that didn't come, mountains that didn't move. Don't skip those reactions. They're part of trusting too. Session 5 will return to the chapters that don't end the way we wanted; tonight, let the discomfort sit if it surfaces.*

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

Questions

7. The mute man couldn't speak. Step's gesture—fist on heart, point at the man—came from somewhere he had not been to before. When have you found yourself doing or saying something you hadn't planned, that turned out to be the right thing?
8. Ian took off his own shirt and handed it over. There was no negotiation, no announcement. What does it look like to be ready to give something off your back without making a thing of it? What gets in the way?
9. Step prayed for Alex from the backyard—never went inside. He told the mother God could heal from anywhere. Where in your life have you been telling yourself you can't pray for something because you aren't close enough, qualified enough, or good enough?
10. The chalk faded but stayed legible. The family walked over the verse every day. What promise from God do you want to put under your feet, where you would walk over it daily?
11. The doctors who tested Alex used words like unexplained, spontaneous, lab error. They didn't use the word miracle. Why are we sometimes the same way about things God has done in our lives? What happens when we name them?

12. Listening, in both stories, was a posture before it was a technique. What posture would you need to take this week to actually listen—not to fix, not to advise, but to hear?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

about 5 minutes

This week

Find one person this week who is going through something hard. Sit with them, in person if possible, and don't try to solve anything. Don't offer Bible verses. Don't pivot to advice. Stay in the room with their pain for as long as they need you to. If silence falls, let it.

And separately, write one verse on a card or a sticky note and put it where you will pass it daily. Pick a verse that contains a promise you need to start trusting. Walk past it on purpose for seven days.

CLOSE

about 5 minutes



Lord, you said nothing is impossible with you. You also said you intercede for us with groanings too deep for words. Teach us this week to listen for what isn't being spoken. Teach us to trust you with the mountains we have stopped naming. Give us the courage to write the verse on the walkway and the willingness to walk over it. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



SESSION THREE

WAITING & GOING

On the long middle, and obedience to the small instruction

This session pairs two practices that look like opposites. Waiting is what you do when nothing is happening. Going is what you do when you can't wait any longer. The Christian life requires both, and most of the time it requires them at the same time.

Linda waited two years on a sidewalk to keep her dogs. The man on the curb on Christmas Eve waited in the cold for someone—anyone—to stop. Step had to go forty minutes south, on a night when no one was out, to find them.

Most of the work of love is in those two practices. The wait that doesn't feel like work, and the going that doesn't feel like obedience until afterward.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

Follow-up question

Last week's practice was sitting with someone in their pain without solving it, and putting a verse where you would walk past it daily. What did you notice?

Gathering question

What is something you are currently waiting on—a person, an answer, a healing, a door to open—where the wait has been longer than you expected?

LEADER NOTE *This question can get raw quickly. People may share a wait that they've been carrying alone for a long time. Receive it; don't fix it. The whole session is going to honor the wait, not solve it.*

READ THE STORY

about 15 minutes

Have someone read the following passage aloud. It is adapted from Chapter 4 of Kindergarten for Eternity, “Home Is Where the Heart Is.”



The concrete was unforgiving. For two years it was all Linda had. She slept under the buzzing glow of streetlamps—not because they offered comfort, but because they offered the illusion of safety.

Women disappeared on those streets. Women were assaulted, beaten, trafficked, left for dead. Linda was unarmed. Her only protection was two dogs who loved her more than any person ever had. Which was why the shelters wouldn’t take her. No dogs allowed. So she made her choice, the way she made it a hundred nights in a row. She kept the dogs. She kept the sidewalk.

Step had seen Linda for over a year. Always exhausted. Always holding on. One evening at dusk, with the predators of the night beginning to come out, something in him broke. He prayed for her—“Lord, we ask for safety. We ask for provision. Only you can do this.” That was the bare version. He let God hear the rest.

Weeks passed. One evening Step was driving and asked God where to go. Cross the street. Go into that supermarket parking lot. He had never pulled into that lot before.

Linda was there. Her face was shining. Before, she had had almost no hope left in her face. Now her face had hope in it the way a window has light in it.

“I have a house,” she said, like she couldn’t quite believe she got to say it. “And it’s fully furnished.”

A local church had come to her. Had seen her. Had given her an apartment. And the dogs were going with her. The thing she had chosen two years of concrete over—the thing every shelter had made her surrender—she got to keep.



LEADER NOTE *If the room is quiet after this story, that’s the right response. The two-year detail will be doing work. Wait at least eight seconds before saying anything.*

OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

First passage

Romans 5:3–5

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans traces a path: suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, character hope. Where in your life can you trace that path looking back, even if you couldn't feel it at the time?

Second passage

Lamentations 3:22–23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Linda needed two years of mornings. Some waits are made of mornings, not weeks or months. Where might you be trying to receive a year of mercy in a single day?

Third passage

Acts 16:9–10

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, Come over to Macedonia and help

us. After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

In Chapter 19 of the book, on Christmas Eve at nine at night, Step felt a nudge to drive forty minutes south to a town he used to live in. He found two men there—one who told him “my assignment is done” and disappeared, and another at the edge of the foothills who had been sitting in the cold praying, telling Step afterward, “I didn’t think He was listening.”

Paul changed continents because of a vision in the night. Step changed counties because of a nudge on Christmas Eve. What is the smallest “come over and help us” you have heard recently? What did you do with it?

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

Questions

13. Linda waited two years rather than abandon her dogs. Most of the systems around her treated that as a problem to be fixed by making her surrender what she loved. What does her two years tell you about what waiting can be a form of?
14. Step prayed the bare version of the prayer for Linda—"safety, provision, only you can do this"—and let God hear the rest. When have you been afraid to pray something out loud? What might you be holding silently right now?
15. The local church came to Linda. They saw her. They gave her an apartment that took her dogs too. What does that picture say about what a church is supposed to do?
16. On Christmas Eve, Step drove into a town when no one was out, and found two men who had been waiting for someone. The math of that, as one of them said, didn't math. Where in your life has God's math not added up to your math?
17. The man at the edge of the foothills had been praying and didn't think God was listening. Who in your life right now might be in a similar place—praying and assuming no one is hearing? What might it look like for you to be the answer to that prayer?
18. Going often happens at inconvenient times—late at night, on holidays, when you are tired. What inconvenient nudges have

you talked yourself out of? What might you not talk yourself out of next time?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

about 5 minutes

This week

Reach out to one person you know who is in a long wait—for healing, housing, a relationship, an answer. Don't fix anything. Don't advise. Just remind them, in your own words, that the wait has not made them invisible. Let them know you see them in it.

And identify one inconvenient time this week—a Sunday afternoon, a late evening, a holiday hour—when you will be available for a nudge. Don't schedule it tightly. Leave room. If something comes up, go.

CLOSE

about 5 minutes



Lord, give us the patience to wait without becoming bitter, and the courage to go when you say go. Make our hearts like the local church that came to Linda—willing to see the whole person, dogs and all. And when the nudge comes on a night when no one else is out, let us be the ones who answer the prayer of someone who didn't think you were listening. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



SESSION FOUR

GIVING & RECEIVING

On love with hands, and letting people teach you

Most of us are better at one of these than the other. Some of us give easily and receive awkwardly. Some of us receive gratefully and give carefully. Almost no one does both with the same hand.

This session pairs a story about giving something specific—a slice of cake on a stranger’s birthday—with a story about receiving from someone you came to give to. Both happened in parking lots. Both involved someone who turned out to be the teacher in the room.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

Follow-up question

Last week's practice was reaching out to someone in a long wait, and leaving room in your week for an inconvenient nudge. What did you notice?

Gathering question

Tell us about a small gift—given or received—that mattered more than its size would suggest.

READ THE STORY

about 15 minutes

Have someone read the following passage aloud. It is adapted from Chapter 6 of Kindergarten for Eternity, “The Birthday Surprise.”



Step was at Vons, about to check out, when the thought came. Don’t go yet. Get a slice of cake. It’s someone’s birthday today.

It stuck out because it made no sense. He had been doing this for six years—grocery runs, burritos, sandwiches, bottles of water. He had never once bought cake. Why cake?

He walked to the bakery counter and picked out a slice. Vanilla, white frosting, sprinkles. Six dollars. He drove three miles to a park he stopped at often.

Joanna was there. Stocky, strong, battle-hardened—the kind of woman who had been on the streets long enough to know how to say she didn’t need anyone. He handed her a burrito the way he handed burritos to everyone else.

“Thank you,” she said. Then she added it. “Today’s my birthday. I’m fifty-four.”

Step stood there for a second. Then he handed her the cake box. “Fifteen minutes ago, God told me to get a slice of cake for somebody’s birthday. He didn’t forget you.”

She stared at the box. She stared at him. The tears came. He didn’t preach. He didn’t pray over her. He just stood there while

she opened the box and ate the cake slowly. Then he drove away, leaving her with frosting on her fingers and an empty box in the grass.



OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

First passage

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Joanna received cake. Step received the chance to be the answer to a prayer she hadn't known how to ask. What did each of them "receive" in this passage? Which one is harder for you?

Second passage

Mark 12:43–44

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.

In Chapter 17 of the book, Step met a homeless cowboy named Michael at a Walmart parking lot exit. Michael had a sign that read "Anything helps, as long as it comes from the heart." Step learned, partway through their conversation, that another homeless man was sleeping in Michael's battered Honda with him—because, as Michael said, "It's not right for him to be on the ground." A man with a sign at a stop sign was running a shelter for one.

Where in your life have you been giving from your wealth when you could have been giving from your poverty? What's the difference?

Third passage

Matthew 25:40

The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

Matthew 25 reframes every act of giving as something done to Christ. How does that change the calculus of the small handoffs in your week—the tip, the favor, the help carrying groceries, the quick text to check on someone?

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

Questions

19. The thought to buy cake made no sense to Step at the time. What kept him from talking himself out of it? What tends to talk you out of similar instructions?
20. Six dollars and one extra stop—that's what the obedience cost. What small obediences have you been waiting for a bigger version of, instead of just doing the small one?
21. Joanna had not had cake on her birthday in years. Who in your life is about to have a day pass that they have stopped expecting anyone to notice?
22. Michael was the giver in his own story even while he was holding a sign. The man with less was sheltering the man with even less. What does it tell you about giving when the people who give most freely are often the ones who have least?
23. Step left the conversation with Michael feeling that he had been ministered to, not the other way around. When have you gone somewhere to give and ended up being the one taught?
24. Receiving is harder than giving for a lot of people. Why? What would it mean to let yourself be on the receiving end of something this week?

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

about 5 minutes

This week

Buy something small—ten dollars or under—for someone you would not normally buy something for. Make it specific to them. Hand it to them in person if you can. If a thought comes about who while you are reading this, that is the person.

And separately, let yourself receive something this week without deflecting it. A compliment. A favor. A gift. Don't reciprocate immediately. Don't minimize. Just receive it and say thank you and let it land.

CLOSE

about 5 minutes



Lord, teach us to give from where we are, not from where we wish we were. Teach us to receive without flinching. Make our hands equally ready for both. And when the cake aisle thought comes, the one that doesn't make sense, give us the courage to obey it before we negotiate with it. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



SESSION FIVE

RETURNING & SUFFERING

On the second visit, and the chapters that don't end the way you wanted

This is the hardest session in the study. It pairs the practice that holds the rest together—returning, the second visit, the showing up again—with the truth that some chapters do not end with a healing or a reunion or an answer.

To pretend otherwise is to misrepresent the streets, and to misrepresent God.

Not every prayer ends with a yes. Some end with a man dying under a bridge with no shirt on, on a cold night. Some end with a person you cannot find again. Returning to the work after one of those days is what tests whether you really came to the streets to give, or whether you came expecting to receive applause for it.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

Follow-up question

Last week's practice was buying something small for someone you wouldn't normally, and letting yourself receive without deflecting. What did you notice?

Gathering question

What is something you have come back to multiple times—a person, a place, a practice, a prayer—even though there was no obvious reward for coming back?

LEADER NOTE *This session can stir grief—people who have prayed for healings that didn't come, who have lost someone the prayers didn't save. Don't rush past those reactions. Honor them. The bridge story is going to honor them.*

READ THE STORIES

about 15 minutes

Two short stories tonight. Have one person read the first, another the second.



First story

From Chapter 2 of the book—the part of Greg’s story we did not read in Session 1.

Step prayed with Greg the first day, then drove home with no idea what would happen next. “That’s the part people don’t talk about,” he writes. “You pray, the air goes still, and then you get in your car and drive home and wonder if anything you just did mattered.”

Two days later he came back. Greg was sitting up. He could hear. He had walked four miles.

A week later he came back again. He had decided that if Greg was still on that embankment, he was going to call social services. He pulled up. Greg was gone. Sleeping bag, bike, can of Raid—all of it. The woman from the laundromat across the street told him: Greg’s brother had come for him from the Midwest. They had not spoken in thirty years.

If Step had not come back, he would never have known. The story would have stopped at the prayer. Most of what God does, He does in the gap between when we want to know and when He decides to tell us. The gap closes when we keep showing up.



Second story

Adapted from Chapter 9 of the book, “Dying Under the Bridge.”

Step had been handing out burgers at a homeless shelter when the nudge came. Just a pull toward somewhere he had no reason to go. It took him to an old drive-in theater nobody used anymore, and then to a bridge he hadn’t known was there.

Most underpasses have signs of life. Cardboard. A tarp. The remains of a fire. This one had nothing. No one had tried to live there. Forty feet in, he saw a shape.

The man had no shirt on. The cold the night before had been low thirties. Step called 911. The paramedics moved fast at first, then slowed. They came back out and Step could read their faces from thirty feet away. Gone.

A hundred yards from where Step stood was a cemetery. Rows of headstones. Names in stone, flowers, some of them fresh. The world measures a life by what gets carved on stone afterward. If nothing gets carved, the life is assumed to not have counted.

Step asked God why on the drive home. The answer came quietly: The man is free. Not free the way we use the word to tidy up a death. Free the way a man is free when whatever had been pressing him down for years had finally let go.

Step never went back to that bridge. He has driven past the cemetery a few times since. Every time, he looks over.



OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

First passage

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Returning is unglamorous. It is also where the harvest is. Where in your life are you tempted to give up because the season hasn't come on your schedule?

Second passage

John 11:35

Jesus wept.

Two words. The shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus arrived after Lazarus had died. He didn't fix the death first. He grieved it. Where in your life have you been trying to fix a thing that you needed to grieve?

Third passage

Psalms 116:15

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants.

The world calls some deaths tragic. The Lord calls them precious. The two are not opposites. What changes if you can hold both at once?

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

Questions

25. If Step had not come back to Greg's embankment, he would never have known about the brother. What in your life has been on the other side of a return visit that almost didn't happen?
26. Step writes about the gap—the time between when we pray and when we find out anything. What helps you stay faithful inside the gap?
27. The man under the bridge died alone, with no shirt on, a hundred yards from a cemetery. The world had not registered his life. Why is it important that the book includes this chapter? What would have been different about the book if it had only included the rescues?
28. Step heard "the man is free" as the answer to his "why." That is not the answer most of us would receive easily. How do you respond to the idea that some of the deaths the world calls tragic, God calls precious?
29. Step never went back to that bridge. Some places we don't return to. What is the difference, in your life, between the things you are called back to and the things you are not?
30. Returning is the unglamorous work that holds everything else together. What return is God asking of you right now? Not the heroic version—the small one.

LEADER NOTE *If anyone is grieving acutely as the discussion goes on, you may need to slow the questions and let them speak longer. The order of the questions is meant to honor that. Don't be in a hurry to reach question 6.*

PRACTICE THIS WEEK

about 5 minutes

This week

Pick one person you connected with meaningfully a while ago and have not followed up on. A coworker who shared something hard. A neighbor who went through a loss. A relative you reached out to once and then drifted from. Reach out again this week. Don't apologize for the gap. Just come back.

And separately, sit this week with one sorrow that hasn't resolved. Not to fix it. Just to be with it. Light a candle. Take a walk. Say the name out loud, if there is a name. Let the sorrow be real.

CLOSE

about 5 minutes



Lord, you wept at the tomb of your friend. You did not rush past the grief to the resurrection, even though you knew the resurrection was coming. Teach us to grieve the things that need grieving. Teach us to come back to the things that need our return. Teach us to trust you with the chapters that did not end the way we wanted, including the ones we are still living. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



LEADER NOTE *This is the heaviest session. As people leave, slow your goodbye. Stand at the door. Make eye contact. Anyone who needs a longer word will surface in the doorway, not in the discussion.*

SESSION SIX

WONDER & SENDING

On the kingdom near, and becoming one of the sent

Last week was the heaviest session. This one is the lightest, and the one that asks the most of you. Both are appropriate to where the study lands.

Wonder is what you have left after twelve weeks of stories like these have done their work on you. The recognition that the room you are standing in is bigger than the room you thought you were standing in. That heaven is closer than you have been told. That God answers prayers about cats and birthdays and brain tumors with the same Spirit by which He answers prayers about kingdoms.

Sending is what you do with that recognition. Tonight is the last session of the study. The book ends. Kindergarten doesn't.

GATHER

about 10 minutes

Follow-up question

Last week's practice was reaching out to someone you had not followed up on, and sitting with one unresolved sorrow. What did you notice?

Gathering question

Tell us about a moment in the last few weeks of this study when something felt like it was getting through to you in a new way.

READ THE STORIES

about 15 minutes

Two short stories tonight, like last week. The first about wonder. The second about sending.



First story

Adapted from Chapter 10 of the book, “The Eagle Guide.”

Step was alone in the coastal hills on his mountain bike. Fall. The sun was getting low. He had come up a maze of trails—some well-worn, some animal tracks—and he didn’t know which trail down was the safe one.

He sat down on the ridge and said it out loud. *Lord, send me your eagle to show me the way.*

There are no known bald eagles in those hills. He knew that when he said it. A bald eagle launched out of a eucalyptus tree right above him. White head, white tail, dark body, unmistakable. It circled over him for about thirty seconds. Then it dove—fast, due west—and disappeared.

Step got on his bike and went west. The trail he picked opened up onto a paved road he had not known was there. The road went all the way down to his home.



Second story

Adapted from Chapter 34 of the book, “Hell and Back.”

The first time Step met Alex was near a creek in town. About fifteen homeless people were there. Step handed out food and told them God loved them. Most of them looked at him like he was crazy. Not Alex. He hugged him. “You always help us. If you ever need anything out here, I’ve got your back.”

Alex was late twenties. Brown hair in tangled waves. A face full of piercings—one between his eyes at the bridge of his nose. He had been homeless for years. He carried Narcan to revive other addicts when they overdosed.

About a year later he told Step what had happened before they met. He had taken 320 hits of acid. He had wanted to die. “I saw hell, and I didn’t want to be there.”

Eight months went by. Step didn’t see him. One day he heard in his spirit to drive forty miles north to a town he had never been to. He went.

Alex was at a park by the city hall, skating down the sidewalk. Same piercings, same hair. His eyes were clear. “Hey! I’m sober, man!” He had a daughter. She was seven. He wanted to be a dad she could be proud of. He had been clean for months.

Step pulled out a small New Testament he kept in the car. He wrote in the cover: To my friend Alex, always trust God. He gave Alex a ride to his place—an old wood house, neat and tidy. Alex got out, then his face went pale. “Oh no! Where’s the book?” They both looked. He found it on the backseat. He held it in his hand and

walked up to the house. A man many had counted out, going inside to care for his young daughter.



OPEN THE SCRIPTURES

about 15 minutes

First passage

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

The eagle is a recurring image in scripture. It came when Step asked. It went where he needed to follow. The road was already in place. What is the difference between asking God for direction in general, and asking Him for an eagle?

Second passage

Joel 2:25

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten.

Alex had years eaten by addiction—years that included 320 hits of acid taken to die. He had a daughter to raise anyway. Where in your life are you trying to walk forward as if the years that were eaten weren't eaten, instead of believing they will be restored?

Third passage

Matthew 28:18–20

Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey

everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The book ends with a single word. Go. Matthew 28 ends with the same word. The going is not optional. The nature of the going is—whether to a country, a sidewalk, a hospital room, a kitchen table where the conversation has been hard. Where are you being sent?

DISCUSS

about 30 minutes

Questions

31. There are no known bald eagles in those hills. Step asked anyway. What have you stopped asking God for because you decided it was unreasonable?
32. The eagle did not build the road. The eagle pointed at a road that was already there. What might already be in place in your life that you simply don't see yet?
33. Alex had been homeless for years and carried Narcan to save other addicts. He was already a minister of mercy before he got sober. Where in your life are you waiting to be qualified before you start, when you might already be where God is using you?
34. Step drove forty miles to a town he had never been to because he heard it in his spirit. He didn't know what he was driving toward. What is the smallest "follow this nudge" you have been resisting, and what would it cost to follow it this week?
35. Six weeks of this study have been a long obedience. What is one specific way you are different now than you were before Session One?
36. If the book ends with go and you are reading it, what does that mean for you? Not generally—specifically. Where are you going? What are you taking?

LEADER NOTE Question 6 is the question the whole study has been building toward. Don't answer it for the group. Ask it slowly. Let the silence carry weight. People may answer with vague intentions; press them gently for specifics. "Who? When? With what?"

PRACTICE THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

about 5 minutes

This week

Take whatever you have heard most insistently across these six weeks, and act on it. Not the safe version. Not the rehearsed version. The real one. The phone call. The drive. The handoff. The conversation. The leaving, or the staying. Whatever it is. Go.

And keep something in your car this week—water bottles, granola bars, gift cards, cash in fives. Something specific you can hand off. Start the practice. The streets do not run on epiphanies. They run on what you have on you when the moment comes.

CLOSE

about 10 minutes

Before the closing prayer, go around the room. Each person names—out loud—one specific thing they will do in the next seven days that is the answer to question 6. The leader goes last.

LEADER NOTE *This is the most important moment of the study. Don't skip it for time. If you only have five minutes, give those five minutes to this. The commitments said out loud in front of the group are what carry the study out the door.*



Lord, you have been with us through six weeks of stories that were not ours, and you have made them ours. You have taught us to stop, to see, to listen, to trust, to wait, to go, to give, to receive, to return, to suffer, to wonder. Now you are sending us. Send us as those who have been changed. Send us with what we have on us. Send us into rooms and streets and conversations and silences where you have already gone ahead. We have one word from you, and it is the word the book ends with. Go. Make us obedient to it. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.



TO READ MORE

The stories in this study are six among many. The full memoir, *Kindergarten for Eternity*, contains thirty-four chapters drawn from nine years of street ministry on the West Coast. If your group wants to keep reading after these six weeks—or if you want to point others to the source—the book is available at Amazon:

<https://a.co/d/01wwFJZ4>

Step is also available for speaking and church visits, including remote via video.

For inquiries, email hello@stepharmon.com.



This study was made because the streets are still there, the curriculum is still running, and the kindergarten is still meeting. May the next class to enroll be yours.

— Step Harmon

This Bible study is free to share. Enjoy and welcome to class.